

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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PRIVACY INTERNATIONAL, AMERICAN CIVIL  
LIBERTIES UNION, AMERICAN CIVIL  
LIBERTIES UNION FOUNDATION; and  
CIVIL LIBERTIES AND TRANSPARENCY CLINIC,

Plaintiffs,

v.

18-CV-1488

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, et al.

Defendants.

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**JOINT STATUS REPORT**

Pursuant to the Text Order of United States Magistrate Judge Hugh B. Scott dated January 31, 2020, plaintiffs Privacy International, American Civil Liberties Union, American Civil Liberties Union Foundation and Civil Liberties & Transparency Clinic, and defendants Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”), Department of Justice Criminal Division, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (“CBP”), Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”), U.S. Secret Service (“USSS”), Department of Justice Office of Inspector General (“DOJ-OIG”), Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General (“DHS-OIG”), Department of Treasury Office of the Inspector General (“Treasury-OIG”) and Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (“TIGTA”) hereby file this joint status report.

In this action, plaintiffs seek to compel the production of records under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (“FOIA”). This status report describes the current status of defendants’ searches and their review and production of records.<sup>1</sup>

1. TIGTA, DHS-OIG, Treasury-OIG and CBP: As explained in defendants’ Status Report dated September 10, 2019, four defendants – TIGTA, DHS-OIG, Treasury-OIG and CBP– have completed their searches and found no responsive records. *See* ECF No. 22 ¶¶ 15.g. & 16. Plaintiffs requested these agencies provide information of the nature of their searches. Pursuant to that request, TIGTA, DHS-OIG, and Treasury-OIG provided plaintiffs with descriptions of their searches on September 3, 2019, and CBP provided plaintiffs a description of its search on December 13, 2019. Based on those descriptions, plaintiffs have determined that they will not challenge the adequacy of the searches. *See* Joint Status Report dated Jan. 31, 2020, ECF No. 32 ¶ 1.

2. IRS, ICE, USSS, and DEA: As explained in prior Joint Status Report, four defendants – IRS, ICE, USSS, and DEA -- have completed their searches and productions in accordance with the interpretation and parameters set forth in defendants’ July 12, 2019 letter to plaintiffs. *See* ECF No. 32 ¶¶ 2-5. Plaintiffs are reviewing the records and the indices and/or explanation for the redactions. *Id.* If plaintiffs determine that they would like to challenge withholdings, redactions, or other aspects of these defendants’ responses, they will confer with defendants regarding a schedule for summary judgment briefing and submit any proposal to the Court in a subsequent status report. *Id.*

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<sup>1</sup> Defendants’ prior Status Report describes the background regarding plaintiffs’ FOIA requests and the efforts by the parties to clarify and narrow the scope of plaintiffs’ requests. *See* ECF No. 22.

3. Criminal Division: The Criminal Division has completed its search for potentially responsive records and currently is in the process of reviewing and processing those records. As explained in the prior Joint Status Report, the Criminal Division proposes to process 500 pages of potentially responsive pages per month and produce to plaintiffs any responsive, non-exempt records on a rolling basis. ECF No. 28 ¶ 6. Since the filing of the last Joint Status Report, the Criminal Division has made three additional monthly productions – one on August 13, 2020, one on September 16, 2020 and another on October 19, 2020.

4. DOJ-OIG: DOJ-OIG completed its search for all responsive, non-exempt material. As explained in the last Joint Status Report, on March 6, 2020, DOJ-OIG sent plaintiffs' counsel a letter producing 47 pages with portions of the records withheld pursuant to Exemptions 6, 7C, and/or 7E. ECF No. 37 ¶ 4.<sup>2</sup> In the letter, DOJ-OIG also explained that it located (1) twenty-one documents consisting of approximately 150 pages that originated with the FBI and (2) one document consisting of approximately 22 pages that originated with the Office of the Attorney General. *Id.* Pursuant to 28 C.F.R. § 16.4, DOJ-OIG referred these documents to the FBI and to the DOJ Office of Information Policy (for the Office of the Attorney General) for processing and direct response. *Id.*

5. FBI: Since the last status report, the FBI has made two additional monthly productions responses – one on August 31, 2020, and another on September 30, 2020. The FBI expects to make another production on or before October 31, 2020. That production will complete FBI processing for the records identified in FBI's search except for the records referred to other agencies for consultation. With regard to the records referred by DOJ-OIG to the FBI for a direct response, the FBI expects to complete its processing of those records by November 30, 2020.

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<sup>2</sup> DOJ-OIG also noted that it had sent portions of four of the 47 pages that contained information of substantial interest to the FBI for consultation. DOJ-OIG will inform plaintiffs of the results following this consultation.

6. As indicated in their Joint Status Report on January 31, 2020 (ECF No. 32 ¶ 9), the parties proposed that they file quarterly status reports hereafter. The next quarterly report to be filed on January 29, 2021. As part of the next proposed status report, one or both parties may propose further orders regarding the management and scheduling of this case.

Dated: October 30, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Jonathan Manes  
Jonathan Manes  
Roderick & Solange MacArthur Justice  
Center  
160 E. Grand Ave., 6<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
Chicago, IL 60615  
312-503-0012  
jonathan.manes@law.northwestern.edu

Brett Max Kaufman  
American Civil Liberties Union  
Foundation  
125 Broad Street, 18th Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
Tel: 212-549-2500  
bkaufman@aclu.org

Jennifer Stisa Granick\*  
American Civil Liberties Union  
Foundation  
39 Drumm Street  
San Francisco, CA 94111  
Tel: 415-343-0758  
jgranick@aclu.org

Caroline Wilson Palow\*  
Privacy International  
62 Britton Street  
London EC1M 5UY  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)203-422-4321

Attorneys for Plaintiffs

JAMES P. KENNEDY, JR.  
United States Attorney

MICHAEL S. CERRONE  
Assistant U.S. Attorney  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of New York  
138 Delaware Avenue  
Buffalo, New York 14202  
716-843-5851  
Michael.cerrone@usdoj.gov

JOSEPH H. HUNT  
Assistant Attorney General

ELIZABETH J. SHAPIRO  
Deputy Branch Director

s/Marcia K. Sowles  
MARCIA K. SOWLES  
Senior Trial Counsel  
United States Department of Justice  
Civil Division, Federal Programs Branch  
1100 L Street, N.W. Room 11028  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
202 514-4960  
Marcia.sowles@usdoj.gov

Attorneys for Defendants

\*Not yet admitted in this District.